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IDLING AWAY EXISTENCE.

A CRITIQUE.

THE plan of examinations for the civil and military service has had a sad effect on the fortunes of a vast number of youths, sons of noblemen and gentlemen, who in former times would, through favour or purchase, have been stuffed into situations they were poorly qualified to fill. Deterred from submitting to the usual examinations, or rejected when they have the temerity to present themselves, what are they to do? Taught no useful trade, accustomed to a life of indulgent ease, and affected by notions of high caste, they are ordinarily spoken of as chargeable with idling away existence. Some few honourably try to adapt themselves to industrial pursuits; but the bulk of them seem to remain an encumbrance on parents, or are shipped off with a few pounds in their pockets to make their way, if possible, in the colonies. If they there sink and perish, or are driven to humble employments for a livelihood, nobody at least knows anything about them.

We have alighted on a book which professes to be the history of one of those who are despatched by relatives to grope their way as colonists. It is entitled 'A Search for a Fortune; the Autobiography of a Younger Son; by Hamilton Lindsay Bucknall' (Daldy, Isbister, & Co. 1878); and has all the appearance of being a candid narrative of what is commonly endured by those who are forced by circumstances—or we might say by their own folly—into a life of adventure and self-reliance at the further end of the world. As a lesson that ought not to be thrown away, we shall glance at a few particulars in this strange revelation. Mr Bucknall, if that be his real name, was the son of an Irish landed gentleman, and had the reputation of being 'a good-hearted idle sort of boy.' He had a good education, embracing a short sojourn in France and Germany, and finishing off with instructions from a private tutor. Having to think about a profession, he chose the army; but being too young for the Horse Guards,

he spent some time as an officer in a regiment of militia, in which he learned his drill. The regiment having been disembodied, he now led an idle life, hunting and shooting, until he was urged to read for the army. Installed at a 'grinder's,' he entirely failed to acquire the knowledge which was attempted to be impressed on him; often he consumed his time in revelry with companions who were equally indifferent to consequences. He was of course 'plucked,' and adieu to any expectation of ever entering the Guards or regular army.

Back to the parental home, he had splendid runs with the hounds, and was so successful as a sportsman that it would seem as if nature intended him for a huntsman. This kind of life was mighty pleasant while it lasted, but for a permanent look-out it only made matters worse. Now began a talk of sheep-farming in Australia or New Zealand, as being a thing well adapted for genteel young fellows with a love of frolic. Pleased with the idea, young Bucknall is shipped off for Melbourne with a trifle of money and some letters of introduction in his pocket. His destination was Auckland in New Zealand; and this he reached, after spending a few days at Melbourne, where he had the happiness of enjoying, with some friends, an excellent dinner at the 'Café de Parisien, Burke Street.' At Auckland he presented a letter of introduction to the Governor, who was very polite; but troubled, we suppose, with hundreds of such letters, could do nothing for him. In desperation, he takes service in a body of soldiers who are appointed to survey the lands of the natives for military settlements. This is an adventurous but toilsome existence. The party has to camp out at night, while no rest could be obtained on account of the legions of fleas which infest the dry fern and sand. 'I now,' says he pathetically, 'was beginning to receive a practical lesson in "roughing it," which was far different in practice from what it seemed in theory; and I thought what a goose I had made myself by not being more industrious when at home, and thus have avoided all this misery.' Eight months were spent in this state of wretchedness. It came to

an end only by a change in government measures. Thankfully the wanderer got back to Auckland; there he procured a passage in the mail-steamer to Sydney in New South Wales, with a view of trying his fortune at the gold-fields. On arriving in Sydney with no more than a few pounds in his pocket, Bucknall indiscreetly took up his abode in a superior boarding-house, where in a week all his money was gone; and requested to leave, he was now in the direst straits. The time had come when he would be glad to accept the meanest employment. Looking over the advertisements in a newspaper, he observed that a barman was wanted at Bradford's Freemason's Hotel, York Street. He had never sold drams or draughts of beer behind a counter, but having been a customer at sundry bars, he was not altogether without experience. The place was accordingly applied for. On going to Bradford's there were at least twenty others waiting in answer to the advertisement. A smart-looking girl, Mary, with an Irish accent, who helped at the bar, took compassion on our hero, and went off to speak to the master on his behalf. 'Who are you?' said the landlord; 'and what do you want?' 'I have come,' I replied, 'in answer to your advertisement in this morning's paper.' 'Very good,' said he; 'and what can you do?' 'I trust, sir, you will find me fully able for the duties you require, and I shall do my best to give you satisfaction.' 'Have you had much experience in the capacity of barman?' 'No; but I have been many times at a bar, and can well understand what I shall be expected to do.' 'Very well; you will do; come here in an hour. Wages two pounds per week, with pint of ale or glass of spirits per day.'

Set to work behind the bar, Bucknall did his best to serve customers; and as he had a good bed and plenty of food, he was pretty well off. The great drawback was the long hours from early morning to past midnight, during which he had to perform this horrid drudgery. He says: 'It was most wearying and distressing to me, tired as I was with my fair day's work, to remain in attendance on a lot of dissipated rowdies. . . . Having been now in this employment four months, I had saved some money, and determined to try my luck at something else, come what would, as the confinement of the house had now become intolerable to me.' Quitting the bar, he was once more at the mercy of the world. For a time he lounged about daily in the beautiful park at Sydney, enjoying the sight of the botanical and zoological specimens, and trying to hear of some situation that might suit him. He was offered ten shillings a week and board as a general servant on a large farm up-country; but the duties, which included teaching the children, assisting in the garden and stable, and if required, minding a flock of sheep, were too irksome, and the situation was rejected. Day after day passed, and still nothing to do. At length his funds were reduced to fourpence; he had

to quit his lodgings; and wandering about friendless, he was fain to appease his hunger by buying a roll and drinking water at a public fountain. He slept in the park under the canopy of heaven. Even this could not last. Downright starvation stared him in the face.

One day he observed two carts laden with logs of timber for firewood. Here was a chance of work. He offered to help to cut the timber; the drivers, however, had nothing to do with the cutting; but they would recommend him to the purchasers of the wood. 'Each cart held about two tons of wood, and on this occasion one customer took both loads. A bargain was soon made between myself and the purchaser. I should receive seven-and-sixpence per ton for cutting and stacking the lot.' This was very hard work, yet it proved a happy relief. After the work was over, there was again a fresh struggle to be encountered. Through the agency of the newspaper, he learns that a man is wanted to take charge of an eight horse-power steam-engine which moves a coffee-mill. 'Here was just the thing to suit me.' It was rather audacious to say so, for he knew nothing of steam-engines beyond seeing them working. No way daunted, he offers himself and is accepted. Wages two pounds a week and all found. The first directions given by the proprietor are to give the engine a thorough cleaning and overhauling; and he was to begin next morning.

On proceeding to his work, and ruefully considering how he was to take the engine to pieces, to clean it, and set it up again, he was addressed by a dissipated-looking individual, who said he would execute the whole job on the moderate terms of being taken to an adjacent tavern and given a skinful of drink—he would take off his coat and begin that moment. The terms were agreed to. Soon the two were hard at work, and dirty as a sweep Bucknall had the satisfaction of seeing the engine ready for a start by eight o'clock in the evening. He conducted the poor dissipated wretch to a tavern, and paying for what drink he might consume, left him to his wretched indulgences, and then went home and to bed. We doubt not the incident so recorded is true to nature. Next morning the fire was got up and steam raised. The proprietor and his wife were delighted with their new engineer, whom they complimented as 'a painstaking, industrious, respectable, intelligent, and remarkably civil young man.' But the 'young man' only viewed the situation as a make-shift. He expected a remittance from home, which would enable him to go off in quest of something better. The anticipated letter of credit arrived, and greatly to the chagrin of his employer, he departed with a young English friend, 'a very aristocratic and rather good-looking young fellow,' to Melbourne; the passage occupying two days and a half. The feeling left in our mind is, that this removal was an error. By assiduous attention and thrift, Bucknall might have gradually improved his circumstances, and

from less to more, risen to be the head of a prosperous manufacturing concern in Sydney.

From all we have heard, the true method of 'getting on' in Australia consists in taking the first situation that offers, though it be only that of a shoe-black at a hotel, and sticking to it till something better casts up. Diligent industry, and civility, along with prudential care of earnings, are sure in the end of finding their reward. We cannot, therefore, but deplore the unsettledness which on this as on several other occasions, shipwrecked the prospects of one who was by no means devoid of ability, and possessed an honourable desire to improve his circumstances. A case in point occurs to remembrance. Not long ago we were told of a young gentleman of good education and parts, but of a wayward turn, who after losing some excellent situations, one after the other, through sheer eccentricity, went as a last resource to Australia. Disappointed of there finding something suitable to his fancy, and left to his shifts, he from necessity took up the business of a fiddler, which he had hitherto practised as an amusement. It was somewhat of a downcome to high expectations; but worn out by his vagaries, his relatives were glad to learn that he had secured employment in an orchestra at thirty shillings a week. The hope is kindly expressed that having found the end of his tether, he will stick to fiddling, and remain for life in the enjoyment of the southern hemisphere.

At Melbourne, with the amount of his remittance Bucknall was all agog for fun and jollity. Misfortune had not taught him to take a sober and earnest view of life. Meeting in with 'two young fellows who had left England expressly for the purpose of purchasing a station and settling down in Australia,' and for which they possessed the requisite amount of capital, he attached himself to them, and entertained the expectation that when they settled as great flock-masters, he would accompany them into the bush, and there play the part of the 'gentle shepherd.' It is amusing to see under what agreeable delusions, certain wandering youths are pleased to indulge. The two young fellows fallen in with were members of 'a good old country family.' On arriving in Melbourne they deposited their capital with a banker, who advised them to look about for twelve months before fixing on a station. This was a sensible advice, but it should have been accompanied with the hint that all would depend on the way in which the twelve months were spent. Instead of living economically and making discreet inquiries regarding sheep-stations, the two young fellows, who were nicknamed Chalker and Smikes, set up housekeeping in splendid style. A handsomely furnished mansion was rented near St Kilda, a pretty watering-place on the sea-shore, six miles from Melbourne. They employed a German cook, bought carriages and horses, hunted with a millionaire in the neighbourhood who kept a pack of hounds, and lived in a style of princely profusion. Invited to take up his quarters with them, Bucknall was in his element. There was plenty shooting. The kangaroo hunts were delightful. When tamer pleasures palled, there was an excursion overland to Sydney, with the view of looking out for a station, and to assist in the choice a Scotch steward was numbered in the party. What ensues is the drollest incident in the book.

The two brothers having satisfied themselves as to the choice of an estate on which to begin a grand system of sheep-management, called on their banker to intimate their decision. The banker was glad to see them, but he feared that they had not been living in a very economical way; whereupon Chalker and Smikes assured him they had merely lived like gentlemen, such as they had been accustomed to all their lives. Not disputing the fact, the banker called on a clerk to shew the state of their account. The result was startling, but only what might have been prognosticated. The entire amount at the credit of the brothers was under a hundred and twenty-five pounds. Their fortune had been squandered in idiotic extravagance. With heavy debts to pay and terribly depressed, the only solution of present difficulties was to sell horses, carriages, and everything else that could be disposed of. There was therefore a general clearance. Soberer if not wiser men, the brothers migrated to a small cottage to the north of Melbourne, where they could keep no servants, but do everything for themselves. The dullness of the place being intolerable, they shortly removed to a weather-boarded cottage at Queenscliff, to which Bucknall accompanied them; and here their scanty means of living were supplemented by such wild-fowl as their guns could supply. A ray of hope supported them. The patrimony of the younger brother had not yet been realised; but as soon as its value reached them, they were to embark as sheep-farmers. What ultimately became of these hopeful scions of an old family, is not stated. On receipt of a second remittance from home, Bucknall left them and returned to England.

So ends what may be called the first part of this serio-comic narrative. Bucknall's family had buoyed him up with the notion of getting him a government appointment, such as a consulship or something of that sort; but there had grown up a spirit of economy, very objectionable to families of distinction, and all hopes of quartering a son on the public revenue were ruthlessly stamped out. It was a bad business. For a while there was some flirting and nonsense, intermingled with the unpleasant reflection as to what was to be done for a livelihood. Bucknall had gained some years' experience, and was no longer a youth. Meditating on future prospects, he is relieved by a letter from a friend at Rosario, in Santa Fé, one of the South American republics, inviting him to come to be a partner with him in a large concern connected with horses; and he is earnestly counselled to bring with him a dog-cart and as much saddlery as he has the means of purchasing. A more whimsical wild-goose search for fortune could hardly be conceived, yet he makes the venture; which turns out to be a distressing failure. He arrives in time to see his friend die of typhoid fever; the large horse-concern proved to be something of the nature of a livery-stable with a lot of horses for hire; and to crown the disaster, a foreman who had been employed during his master's illness, has robbed and broken up the establishment.

We have not space to follow our hero through his varied adventures in a country where law and justice are little better than a sham, where murders and assassinations are of frequent occurrence, and where no man thinks of travelling without loaded

revolvers. Discouraged, Bucknall does not give up the game. He contrives to start on his own account a horse-concern, which was dignified with the sounding name of the 'Caballeriza Central.' The hazard he had run is at length painfully demonstrated. Having returned home for a short time on a visit, he leaves everything in charge of a confidential friend, his countryman, with whom he has become acquainted. On his return, the Caballeriza is found in a state of desolation. The trusted confidential friend having lost his all at a gambling establishment, had sold off everything dead and alive in the stable, and vanished no one knew whither. Here was point-blank ruin; and the moral we gather is, that fortune should not be sought for amidst the social irregularities and deadly fevers of South America. Strangely enough, Bucknall did not learn wisdom by his misadventures in foreign lands. Proceeding to Brazil, he closes his book somewhat abruptly, telling us that he was contriving a tunnel-railway across the bay of Rio Janeiro, and hopes at some future day to present a sequel to 'A Search for Fortune.'

The story so far as it goes cannot be read without pity for the unfortunate writer, whose career, we think, offers a solemn warning to the young and inconsiderate, and to them especially we recommend the work for perusal. In the event of a new edition, a number of expletive circumstances might advantageously be omitted, and it would be an improvement to introduce some dates into the narrative.

w. c.

TWICE WOODED, TWICE WON.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

I HAVE frequently been asked the question—being in my thirty-fifth year, with ample means to marry—why I, Gerald Burgogne, barrister-at-law of Lincoln's Inn, am still a bachelor. Even my dear mother, who in her inmost heart rejoices at having as yet no rival in the affections of her only son—even my mother asked me lately if I had never seen the woman I would wish to make my wife. But a few years ago I could not have borne to read the written record of my life's great sorrow, much less to write it with my own hand; but time having in some measure softened its poignancy, I feel as if the retrospect will soothe rather than distress me. My little sketch will be taken from entries in my diary—hitherto the sole depository of my secret thoughts—assisted by my vivid recollection of all that has occurred since my twenty-first birthday.

Up to that period my life was entirely uneventful. I was happy in having most kind and affectionate yet not over-indulgent parents. Every care was bestowed upon my education, and I believe I was well prepared for the university when I left home for Oxford. I was delighted at the prospect of college life. My rooms especially pleased me at Magdalen; they were situated in the quadrangle exactly opposite the grand old tower, then draped in its rich autumnal robe of vivid scarlet. The day after my arrival, a man about my own age, and whose appearance greatly interested me, took possession of the rooms immediately beneath my own. Indeed he was calculated to command universal admiration; his fine figure,

noble head, and perfect features formed the ideal of an Apollo. To these attractions were added a rich voice and particularly fascinating manners. He was universally admired by men; by women, alas, adored! I suppose contrasts are sometimes favourable to friendship as well as to love, for when we became acquainted, Roland Mornington took a great fancy to me—as unlike himself as one human being could well be to another. I was never, I believe, considered particularly good-looking excepting by my mother. He was gay; I was grave. He was never happy without excitement; my pleasures were calm and tranquil. Nevertheless we agreed very well. But as I saw more of him, I observed with pain the serious failings of his character. His temper at the least contradiction was uncontrollable; and having no sense of religion, he had of course no motive for restraint of any kind, only submitting to that imposed by the rules of the college as far as he was compelled to do so. He was an adept at all athletic sports; but in the mental race for honours he was the hare of the fable; I the tortoise. He trusted to his brilliant abilities alone; I to indefatigable study. The consequence was that I reached the goal, while he failed.

When the time arrived for our departure from the university, we separated with mutual promises to correspond; he to travel for two years or more before settling down in his ancestral home as a country gentleman; I, to immerse myself in chambers with a leading Q. C. to study for the Bar. A few letters passed between Roland Mornington and myself; but by degrees our correspondence dropped. I was called to the Bar at the age of twenty-four, and at thirty found myself in capital practice. I was thoroughly interested in my profession, so much so indeed that I cared little for society; and that I might attend to it more assiduously, I left my father's pleasant house at Richmond to live in chambers at Lincoln's Inn, going home but once a week, and seldom entering the gay world of London.

I should have given up all visiting at this period of my life, but for a very fashionable relative of mine, who was constantly remonstrating with me upon this point. This was my aunt Lady M'Ivor. She was a widow, about my own age, and always protested that she was born an aunt, and was consequently my junior. Probably she was. I only know that she really looked years younger than she was—a fact probably due to a good figure, pretty piquante features, and a remarkably youthful style of dress. When very young she had married a Scotch Baronet, many years her senior, who left her with an ample jointure, a fine old castle in the Highlands, and a fair-haired little Baronet in the nursery, to whom I was both god-father and guardian.

It was my young aunt's firm resolve not to marry again. She used to say the freedom of widowhood was too agreeable to her. Still she liked the attentions of the other sex, and required an escort whenever she went into society. She even considered herself too young to be accompanied by any one except a relation; so it occurred to her that I was the very person most suitable for her purpose; and she was determined, as she said, to beguile me out of my shell. At last I quite dreaded the sight of her carriage at

my door, knowing it generally brought a summons to some tiresome soiree or to some place of amusement. Occasionally I was to escort her to the Opera; then, and then only I was her willing slave, music being my one delight, my passion.

With such feelings, it may be imagined how far from cordial my manner was, when one afternoon towards the end of May, which I had devoted to the study of an important case—a day ever to be remembered by me; therefore I can recall, I think, every word that passed—my clerk announced Lady M'Ivor.

'My dear aunt!' I exclaimed as I rose to receive her. 'This is really extremely kind; but I am just now immersed in'—

'In fiddlesticks!' she replied. 'You must not refuse to accompany me to-night to a most charming *réunion*. Not a crush, which I know you abominate; but quite a select circle—under two hundred, I am told—which is, you know, a mere handful in Lady Follibank's great rooms. And the music is always so good there,' she added in a coaxing tone.

'My dear aunt,' I replied, 'if I *do* go, I should probably avoid the music-room.'

'And yet, Gerald, you pretend to be fond of music.'

'The very reason I do not care for what you call drawing-room music. It is an art which requires a life's devoted study.'

'Upon my word,' remarked my aunt, 'you have grown amazingly fastidious. But in this case your fine taste will certainly not be offended, as Lady Follibank always engages the first artistes for her parties.' And thus my persevering companion talked on till she gained her point. She had effectually interrupted my train of thought; so I resigned myself to the inevitable, and put away my papers with a sigh of regret, little dreaming that I should never resume my occupation with the same zest, or take the same pleasure in it which it had hitherto afforded me.

At the appointed hour I duly made my appearance in my aunt's drawing-room. She was already dressed; and the perfection of her evening toilet, with the addition of the slightest *souffon* of rouge, made her look wonderfully girlish. On our arrival at Lady Follibank's spacious mansion in Park Lane, I found, as I expected, the usual crush; and as soon as I had found a good listener for my aunt, I made my escape as speedily as possible into an apartment at the end of the suite, which appeared to be nearly unoccupied. I saw at a glance that it was the music-room. Here I amused myself for some time by looking over the programme and idly scanning some of the music which was new to me. Among the few artistes engaged there was one name only with which I was quite unacquainted; it was that of a singer, Mademoiselle Francini. 'Some new protégée of Lady Follibank's,' I thought. 'I may as well secure a good position for both seeing and hearing, as I am here.'

Presently several persons entered the upper part of the room exactly opposite to the place I had selected, so that I had a full view of the group. A lady, still very handsome, though probably approaching middle age, was conducted to the piano, followed by a youthful copy of herself, a lovely girl, who took her position beside her elder sister, or mother, as the case might be, while that lady

played a symphony in grand style. Then the girl commenced her divine song. From the first thrilling note to the last I was spellbound! That voice, so sympathetic, that perfect intonation and faultless style, would have been captivating to me had she been the plainest of women. But when to these glorious gifts was added beauty of a very unusual order, no wonder that she commanded universal admiration. I thought then that I too was an admirer, only. It was from this delusive dream that I was doomed to be cruelly roused. Yet before I write of feelings so long buried in my own heart, I will describe her who was their innocent cause.

Tall and graceful as an arum lily, her figure only wanted the additional fullness of ripper years to make it perfect. The glossy black hair was simply coiled round her elegantly shaped head; the eyes were so thickly veiled with lashes of the same hue, that it was difficult to ascertain their colour. I know now that they were of that darkest deepest gray which looks black by artificial light. The other features were equally fine; the complexion of that creamy white which distinguishes fair Italian women. Yet even all this loveliness would scarcely have affected me had expression been wanting. It was the soul shining through all which first attracted and finally enslaved me!

When the song ceased I eagerly asked the man next me for information beyond what the programme told.

'The widow and daughter of the tenor Claudio Francini, who sang here some years ago,' was the reply.

I had never heard of him.

'I do not think he sang much in public,' continued my informant; 'but he taught in very fashionable circles—Lady Follibank's daughters among others; and she is now patronising the girl, who has beauty enough to get on without her. But hush! She is going to sing again.'

This time she surpassed herself. The slight embarrassment apparent on the first occasion was now succeeded by that confidence in her own powers which can alone insure perfect success. Then her complete abnegation of self in her love for her art, which she evidently possessed, and the deep feeling she threw into every phrase of the music, would, I repeat, have caused my heart to surrender at once, even had she been without personal beauty. As it was, I may as well confess here that she was my first, my last, and only love!

As the last notes of the song died away, a voice near me, which seemed familiar, exclaimed, above the gentle movement of gloved hands, and the faint fluttering of fans which is permitted by society to express approbation—'Brava! bravissima!' Then in a low tone of rapture, the words 'Divinely beautiful!' I quickly glanced around me, and beheld my old college friend Roland Mornington! At any other time this meeting would have given me real pleasure, but at that moment I could scarcely greet him with cordiality. He seemed delighted to meet me however, and asked me a dozen questions before I had time to answer one. The only one to which he really seemed to care for a reply was: 'Who is that lovely girl?'

I handed him my programme, pointing to her name.

'Did you ever see anything so beautiful in your life?' he continued, gazing at the fair singer, who was now smiling and blushing at the compliments and thanks she received from those who were able to approach near enough to offer them.

'I think I never heard such a voice,' I replied as calmly as I could.

'Ah, Burgogne,' he exclaimed, 'I see you are not changed. Beauty has no more charms for you than of old. But I shall not rest till I am introduced.' As he said this he disappeared in the crowd; and I saw him no more till he had effected his object. Then my very soul sickened as I watched him exerting every art of which he was master to please his fair companion, while she listened with evident pleasure, even as Juliet might have 'drunk the utterance' of young Montague's fatal love in just such a scene as this. Roland's handsome person and winning manners were only too likely to fascinate her. Would she withstand him? And why should she? I could not help asking myself this last question. Then again he might be greatly changed, his youthful faults and follies corrected. Alas! unless such were the case, he would make no woman happy. While I would have given years of my life for such a smile as I then saw her bestow upon him!

Presently the mother interrupted their *tête-à-tête*, and I saw him accompany them from the room. I quickly followed, watched them descend the stairs, and accept his escort to their carriage, at the door of which he stood bareheaded for some minutes, talking with great animation. As he returned, still watching him, myself unseen, I saw that his face was flushed, his eyes brilliant with excitement; and from that moment I knew that he was my rival. This conviction agitated me to such a degree that I quite forgot my aunt, till her footman informed me that her Ladyship was waiting to go home.

I found her quite cross, as well she might be, at my inattention. Of course I made a thousand apologies, and was graciously forgiven—more readily than I deserved. As we were going home, my aunt asked, in the most indifferent manner, what I thought of the artistes we had met.

'I think Lady Follibank was most fortunate in her choice,' I replied.

'Is that all, Gerald? Then you do not think them so wonderfully handsome? Every one was raving about *la belle Claudia*, and some of the men admired the mother's English complexion the most.'

'Is Claudia, Mademoiselle Francini?'

'Of course,' replied my aunt. 'She is named after her father Claudio, who died about five years ago.—By-the-bye, who was that handsome fellow who was with her nearly all the evening?'

'A college friend of mine.' I then told her of our former friendship, the years which had elapsed since we parted, and our unexpected meeting that night.

'Mark my words!' said my aunt—and they seemed to stab me to the heart—'that man will marry her—and perhaps'—

'Aunt Fanny!' I exclaimed, starting up in the carriage, 'you are hinting at unhappy consequences!'

'Good gracious, Gerald! I have hinted at nothing of the kind.'

'Well, aunt, I think it unfair to prejudge the future of others.'

'My dear Mentor,' she replied, 'my words referred more to your friend than to the lady; and I must confess, at the risk of offending you again, that handsome as he is, I dislike the expression of his countenance exceedingly.'

This was the opinion of a shrewd woman of the world; and I could not contradict it. The reflections it gave rise to made me sad and sick at heart.

From this memorable evening the first use I made of my *Times* each morning was to look with care down the column devoted to notices of forthcoming concerts. The name I so anxiously sought did not appear for a fortnight; then to me it seemed printed in letters of fire, so distinctly it stood out from all others. The advertisement was long, announcing the 'First appearance in London of Mademoiselle Claudia Francini,' who was to sing in a grand operatic recital at Exeter Hall, in Gounod's *Faust*. I threw down my paper, took a single cup of tea by way of breakfast, and jumping into the first hansom I met with, hastened to secure my stall, though the concert was not to take place for another week.

Would Roland be there? I had not seen him since we met at Lady Follibank's, though he then appeared so pleased to renew our acquaintance; yet though he knew where to find me, he had not given me his temporary town address. It was hardly likely that he had left London in the height of the season. What was I to think? Alas! I had little doubt, from my knowledge of his character, that he was completely engrossed by his pursuit of the lovely Claudia.

The night of the concert arrived, and with feverish impatience I drove to the Hall, and arrived there before the doors were opened. This night I felt sure would determine my fate. Should Roland be there, it could only be with the one object. When at length I gained my seat, it was still so early that I had time to watch the audience as the room filled. I thought I could not fail to see Roland had he been present; his unusual height made him always conspicuous. I began to breathe more freely; my spirits rose as I looked for him in vain. It was even possible that the attentions I had so jealously watched were only the result of a passing fancy, one of his old flirtations. With this soothing idea—scarcely a hope—I was able, contrary to my expectations, to enjoy the introduction to the opera, that mysterious unearthly music which so well prepares one for Goethe's solemn story.

How I longed yet dreaded to hear Marguerite! The moment was at hand. She appeared. No wonder she met with a reception so rapturous. I can remember every detail of her dress and appearance. As on the first evening I beheld her, she wore clouds of some clear white material over gleaming satin. I had then admired the elegant simplicity of her attire. There was an addition to it now, which to my mind was no improvement. A diamond spray trembled in her hair; a necklace of the same gems, with other dazzling ornaments, encircled her ivory throat; which were to my jealous heart as so many Satanic temptations, even as were Marguerite's jewels of which she was about to sing. All my hopes were at an end.

The diamonds were, as I heard a lady remark, 'fit for a duchess.' It was clear that they must be a gift, for she was not sufficiently known to have received them as a tribute to her talent. No doubt they were the gift of Roland Mornington; and I knew that he had so much the more the advantage of me.

Still I remained drinking in the delicious tones of that voice to the end; then I resolved to make my way round to the artistes' entrance, in the mad hope of seeing her, even with the dreaded lover. I selected a convenient spot where I was not likely to be observed, and had not long to wait before I saw Mademoiselle Francini approaching—yes, leaning on the arm of Roland Mornington. He was bending down to her whispering words which called up a lovely blush to that fair face, now looking so proud and happy. Thank heaven, her mother was with them! I still watched them, saw Roland hand his companions into their carriage, and—oh, the anguish of that moment!—he this time accompanied them.

The following day I was too ill both in body and mind to see any one, and gave orders accordingly. My soul was filled with an intense desire to see Roland, and discover his intentions towards Mademoiselle Francini. But I had no idea where he was to be found in the wilderness of the metropolis. I was acquainted with his address in Yorkshire; but I also knew that his grand old place there was seldom honoured with his presence, much less likely to be so now. And after all, what had I to do with this affair? In my cooler moments I saw clearly that I could not interfere unasked. In the afternoon I was sitting alone still absorbed in these conflicting thoughts, when a knock at the outer door of my chambers roused me. It was too late for a client, even if I had not given strict orders to be denied. But I had little time for doubt. Another knock, and the door of my room was almost burst open by the very person I most wished to see—Roland Mornington! I consequently welcomed him most cordially, which apparently surprised him, for he exclaimed: 'This is really kind, old fellow. I assure you, I expected a very different greeting; I have behaved so abominably to you. But I know you will forgive me for not calling when you know my excuse. You will never guess!'

'Tell me then at once.'

'I am going to be married.'

Sick and faint as I turned at these words, I nevertheless contrived to congratulate him.

'And now,' he continued, 'you will be still less likely to guess to whom.'

'Yes,' I calmly replied; 'I know. Mademoiselle Francini.'

'Who, in the name of all that's wonderful, told you?' he eagerly asked.

'My own observation,' I replied.

'Ah; I forgot you saw us together at Lady Follibank's; and you always were such a fellow for finding one out. It is strange too that you should, for I do not believe that you have any personal experience of the tender passion. But be very sure, Mr Gerald Burgogne, that your own turn will come.'

'I am quite sure it never will,' I replied.

'No? How grave you look about it. I suppose you think I am sacrificing myself?'

'Indeed,' I interrupted, 'I think no such thing.

On the contrary' — I stopped, fearing I should say too much and betray myself.

'Of course,' he continued, 'it is far from a good match for me; but you know I have no one to please but myself.'

'And her,' I observed.

'Hang it all!' he exclaimed. 'She ought to be satisfied. Ten thousand a year and not a bad-looking fellow for a husband; I call her decidedly lucky.'

'Most men will call *you* so,' I said, trying to curb my indignation.

'Well, I am not so sure of that,' was his answer. 'If I had not seen this little witch, I should have proposed for Lady Barbara Gauntlet. She would have me to-morrow, if I chose to ask her.'

'Then why didn't you?' I exclaimed angrily.

'My dear fellow, don't you see that I am over head and ears in love with Claudia? I positively could not live without her; so I can't help myself. And that being the case—as Claudia has no male relative—I want you to do me a favour; which is, to act the part of father and give her away on the occasion.'

I started from my seat, and pacing the room in my agitation, asked him if he had no relation he could apply to for that purpose.

'No. The fact is,' he replied, 'I do not want to be bothered with any of my own people, for though they have no right to interfere, they would try.'

'I am afraid however, you must find some one else, Roland; for like them, I have my doubts about this marriage being a prudent one.'

'Of course I know that,' was his answer, quite misunderstanding my meaning. 'But as I intend to marry Claudia, some one must give her away. So once for all, Burgogne, will you?'

Certainly this was the irony of fate—that I should be coolly asked to give the woman I could have worshipped, to another. No! I could at least avoid that climax to my misery. I was therefore on the point of repeating my refusal, when it suddenly occurred to me that I might be of some little service to my heart's idol if I accepted the office assigned to me; so, after a long pause, during which Roland was evidently with much difficulty controlling his temper, I said: 'I will consent to do this for you, Roland, on one condition only—namely that you will make a liberal settlement upon her.'

'What nonsense!' he exclaimed. 'Why, that will cause no end of delay; and Claudia does not expect anything of the kind.'

'I daresay not,' I replied; 'but that does not alter my decision. When is the marriage to take place?'

'This day three weeks if possible; it is all but fixed.'

'There will be time then for all that is required,' was my deliberate reply; and I asked him what would have been done about settlements had he married Lady Barbara.

'Oh, that would have been a very different affair. She has fifty thousand pounds of her own; and I could have waited the law's delay with the utmost resignation, I assure you. Now, I cannot—in fact I *will* not.'

'Then you must ask some one else to act for you,' I replied; 'for I consider that Mademoiselle Francini has as much right to a settlement as

Lady Barbara. For your sake she gives up a profession which promised a brilliant career; and there is great fascination in professional life for those who can command success. The least you can do in return is to insure her a certain degree of independence of you.'

'Well,' said he somewhat reluctantly, 'I consent, if you will be her trustee. I will see my solicitor directly upon the subject, and tell him to call upon you.'

I have given this conversation in detail, to shew how almost unavoidably I was drawn into an arrangement which subsequently brought me into constant communication with Claudia Francini.

Roland did not suffer much time to elapse before he brought his intended bride, accompanied by her mother, to my chambers. The beauty so brilliant by the artificial light in which I had hitherto seen it, was not diminished by the bright summer morning, while occasionally an involuntary glance at her lover immeasurably enhanced the expression of that perfect face. Ah! she had then given her heart of hearts to this volatile unstable being. Would he prove worthy of such a treasure? Alas! I feared exceedingly for her future peace and for that of the fond mother, who now looked so proud and happy.

I took an early opportunity of asking Roland what arrangement had been made for the mother. 'Ah! that is the chief drawback to the affair,' he replied. 'Being both almost dependent upon their profession, she must live with us, as of course I could not allow my wife's mother to teach.'

'No indeed; you ought not. But have they nothing beyond it?' I asked.

'Only about enough to buy bonnets, I should think,' was his flippant answer; 'and that is Madame Francini's. It seems "Squalini" left his wife his savings; his daughter, his profession, which he expected would make her fortune. But after all, I do not mind very much having the mother to live at the Hall. There is plenty of room. She will be useful in helping Claudia to manage a large household; and she is a lady.'

'In every respect,' I replied.

'But I mean by birth,' said Roland. 'She is of good family (the Lascelles of —shire), and despairing of obtaining their consent, she ran away with and was married to Francini, her Italian singing-master, when only seventeen, he being two or three years older. They lived for ten years in Naples, where Claudia was born. Then they fell in with Lady Follibank, whose daughters were Francini's pupils. She advised them to come to England, where she promised to introduce him to a good connection. This she effected; and he was getting on rapidly, when he was taken ill, and died about five years ago; Claudia being only fourteen at the time. She, at her father's request, continued her musical education till she was eighteen; and in the meantime helped her mother by giving lessons to the younger pupils. And to think that this must have gone on to the end of time if Claudia had been ugly.'

I groaned in spirit. How little she knew him. On ascertaining that Madame Francini had about a hundred a year, I insisted upon five times that amount being settled upon her daughter absolutely, without reference to children, as the

Mornington estates were strictly entailed upon the male heir, and daughters well provided for by the late Mr Mornington's will.

SOME GOSSIP ABOUT LEICESTER SQUARE.

In old-world London, Leicester Square played a much more important part than it does to-day. It was then the chosen refuge of royalty and the home of wit and genius. Time was when it glittered with throngs of lace-bedizened gallants; when it trembled beneath the chariot-wheels of Beauty and Fashion; when it re-echoed with the cries of jostling chairmen and link-boys; when it was trodden by the feet of the greatest men of a great epoch—Newton and Swift, Hogarth, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a host of others more or less distinguished. Mr Tom Taylor, in his interesting work entitled *Leicester Square*, tells us that the vicissitudes of a London quarter generally tend downwards through a regular series of decades. It is first fashionable; then it is professional; then it becomes a favourite locality for hotels and lodging-houses; then the industrial element predominates, and then not infrequently a still lower depth is reached. Leicester Square has been no exception to this rule. Its reputation in fact was becoming very shady indeed, when the improvement of its central inclosure gave it somewhat of a start upwards and turned attention to its early history.

Of old, many of these grand doings took place at Leicester House, which was the first house in the Square. It was built by Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester, a staunch Royalist, somewhere about 1636. His sons, Viscount Lisle and the famous Algernon Sidney, grew up less of Royalists than he was; and to Leicester House, with the sanction and welcome of its head, came many of the more prominent Republicans of the day, Vane and Neville, Milton and Bradshaw, Ludlow and Lambert. The cream of history lies not so much in a bare notation of facts as in the little touches of nature and manners which reproduce for us the actual human life of a former age, and much of this may be gleaned from the history of the Sidneys. They were an interesting family, alike from their rank, their talents, their personal beauty, and the vicissitudes of their fortunes. The Countess was a clever managing woman; and her letters to her absent lord when ambassador in France convey to us many pleasant details of the home-life at Leicester House. Still more charming is it to read the pretty little billets addressed to the Earl by his elder girls. Of these six beautiful daughters of the house of Sidney, four were married and two died in the dawn of early womanhood. Of the younger of these, Lady Elizabeth, the father has a touching entry in his journal. After narrating her death, he adds: 'She had to the last the most angelical countenance and beauty, and the most heavenly disposition and temper of mind that I think were ever seen in so young a creature.'

With her death the merry happy family life at Leicester House drew to a close. The active bustling mother, whose influence had brought the different jarring chords into harmony, died a few months afterwards; and the busy years as they sped onwards, while consummating the fall of

Charles, and consolidating the power of Cromwell, also put great and growing disunion between the Sidney brothers. At the Restoration, Algernon was in exile; Lord Lisle's stormy temper had alienated him from his father; the Earl's favourite son-in-law was dead; of the three who remained he was neither proud nor fond; and lonely and sick at heart, he grew weary of the splendid home from which the fair faces of his handsome children had gone for ever, and made preparations to leave it. He was presented to Charles II.; and immediately afterwards retired to Penshurst in Kent; and Leicester House was let, first to the ambassadors of the United Provinces; and then to a more remarkable tenant, Elizabeth Stewart, the ill-fated Princess and Queen of Bohemia. She had left England in 1613 a lovely happy girl, the bride of the man she loved, life stretching all rainbow-hued before her. She returned to it a weary haggard woman of sixty-five, who had drunk to the dregs of every possible cup of disappointment and sorrow. Her presence was very unwelcome, as that of the unfortunate often is. Charles II., her nephew, was very loath indeed to have the pleasure of receiving her as a guest; but she returned to London whether he would or not, and Leicester House was taken for her. There she languished for a few months in feeble and broken health, and there, on the anniversary of her wedding-day, she died.

The house immediately to the west of Leicester House belonged to the Marquis of Aylesbury; but in 1698 it was occupied by the Marquis of Caermarthen, who was appointed by King William III. cicerone and guide to Peter the Great when he came in the January of that year to visit England. Peter's great qualities have long been done full justice to; but in the far-off January of 1698 he appeared to the English as by no means a very august-looking potentate; he had the manners and appearance of an unkempt barbarian, and his pastimes were those of a coal-heaver. His favourite exercise in the mornings was to run a barrow through and through Evelyn's trim holly-hedges at Deptford; and the state in which he left his pretty house there is not to be described. His chief pleasure, when the duties of the day were over, was to drink all night with the Marquis in his house at Leicester Fields, the favourite tipples of the two distinguished toppers being brandy spiced with pepper; or sack, of which the Czar is reported to have drunk eight bottles one day after dinner. Among other sights in London, the Marquis took him to see Westminster Hall in full term. 'Who are all these men in wigs and gowns?' he asked. 'Lawyers,' was the answer. 'Lawyers!' he exclaimed. 'Why, I have only two in my dominions, and when I get back, I intend to hang one of them.'

In January 1712 Leicester House, which was then occupied by the imperial resident, received another distinguished visitor in the person of Prince Eugene, one of the greatest captains of the age. In appearance he was a little sallow wizened old man, with one shoulder higher than the other. A soldier of fortune, whose origin was so humble as to be unknown, his laurels were stained neither by rapacity nor self-seeking; and in all the vicissitudes of his eventful life he bore himself like a hero, and a gentleman in the truest and fullest acceptance of the word. Dean Swift

was also at this time in lodgings in Leicester Fields, noting with clear acute unpying vision the foibles and failings of all around him, and writing to Stella from time to time after his cynical fashion, 'how the world is going mad after Prince Eugene, and how he went to court also, but could not see him, the crowd was so great.'

A labyrinth of courts, inns, and stable-yards had gradually filled up the space between the royal mews and Leicester Fields; and between 1680 and 1700 several new streets were opened through these; one reason for the opening of them being the great influx of French refugees into London, on the occasion of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Many of these exiles settled in and around Leicester Fields, and for their use several chapels were built. The neighbourhood has ever since been a resort of French immigrants.

In one of these streets opening into Leicester Square, St Martin's Street, Sir Isaac Newton lived for the last sixteen years of his life. The house in which he lived looks dingy enough now; but in those days it was considered a very good residence indeed, and like Leicester House was frequented by the best company in the fashionable world. The genius and reputation of its master attracted scientific and learned visitors; and the beauty of his niece Mrs Catharine Barton, drew to her feet all the more distinguished wits and beaux of the time.

Between 1717 and 1760 Leicester House became what Pennant calls 'the pouting-place of princes,' being for almost all that time in the occupation of a Prince of Wales who was living in fierce opposition to the reigning king. In 1718 the Prince of Wales having had a furious quarrel with his father George I., on the occasion of the christening of the Prince's son George William, left St James's, and took Leicester House at a yearly rent of five hundred pounds; and until he succeeded to the throne in 1727, it was his town residence.

Here he held his court—a court not by any means strait-laced; a gay little court at first; a court whose selfish intrigues and wild frolics and madcap adventures and humdrum monotony live for us still in the sparkling pages of Horace Walpole; or are painted in with vivid clearness of touch and execution, but with a darker brush, by Hervey, Pope's Lord Fanny, who was a favourite with his mistress the handsome accomplished Caroline, Princess of Wales. Piloted by one or other of these exact historians, we enter the chamber of the gentlewomen-in-waiting, and are introduced to the maids-of-honour, to fair Mary Lepell, to charming Mrs Bellenden, to pensive gentle Mrs Howard. We see them eat Westphalia ham of a morning, and then set out with their royal master for a helter-skelter ride over hedges and ditches, on borrowed hacks. No wonder Pope pitied them; and on their return, who should they fall in with but that great poet himself! They are good to him in their way, these saucy charming maids-of-honour, and so they take the frail little man under their protection and give him his dinner; and then he finishes off the day, he tells us, by walking three hours in the moonlight with Mary Lepell. We can imagine the affected compliments he paid her and the

burlesque love he made to her; and the fun she and her sister maids-of-honour would have laughing over it all, when she went back to Leicester House and he returned to his pretty villa at Twickenham.

As the Prince grew older his court became more and more dull, till at last it was almost deserted, when on the 14th of June 1727 the loungers in its half-empty chambers were roused by sudden news—George I. was dead; and Leicester House was thronged by a sudden rush of obsequious courtiers, among whom was the late king's prime-minister, bluff, jolly, coarse Sir Robert Walpole. No one paid any attention to him, for every one knew that his disgrace was sealed; the new king had never been at any pains to conceal his dislike to him. Sir Robert however, knew better; he was quite well aware who was to be the real ruler of England now; and he knew that the Princess Caroline had already accepted him, just as she accepted La Walnoden and her good Howard; and so all alone in his corner he chuckled to himself as he saw the crowd of sycophants elbow and jostle and push poor Lady Walpole as she tried to make her way to the royal feet. Caroline saw it too, and with a flash of half-scornful mischief lighting up her shrewd eyes, said with a smile: 'Sure, there I see a friend.' Instantly the human stream parted, and made way for her Ladyship.

In 1728 Frederick, the eldest son of George and Caroline, arrived from Hanover, where he had remained since his birth in 1707. It was a fatal mistake; he came to England a stranger to his parents, and with his place in their hearts already filled by his brother. It was inevitable that where there was no mutual love, distrust and alienation should come, as in no long time they did, with the result that the same pitiful drama was played out again on the same stage. In 1743 Frederick Prince of Wales took Leicester House and held his receptions there. He was fond of gaiety, and had a succession of balls, masques, plays, and supper-parties. His tastes, as was natural considering his rearing, were foreign, and Leicester House was much frequented by foreigners of every grade. Desnoyers the dancing-master was a favourite habitué, as was also the charlatan St-Germain. In the midst of all this fiddling and buffoonery the Prince fell ill; but not so seriously as to cause uneasiness to any one around him; consequently all the world was taken by surprise when he suddenly died one morning in the arms of his friend the dancing-master. After his death his widow remained at Leicester House, and like a sensible woman as she was, made her peace with the king her father-in-law, who ever afterwards shewed himself very kind and friendly to her.

In October 1760 George III. was proclaimed king; and again a crowd of courtiers thronged to Leicester House to kiss the hand of the new sovereign. For six years longer the Princess of Wales continued to live at Leicester House; and there in 1765 her youngest son died, and the following year she removed to Carlton House.

While the quarrel between George II. and Frederick was at its fiercest, the central inclosure of Leicester Square was re-arranged very elegantly according to the taste of the day; and an equestrian statue of George I., which had belonged to

the first Duke of Chandos and had been bought at the sale of his effects, was set up in front of Leicester House, where it remained, a dazzling object at first, in all the glory of gilding, which passed with the populace for gold; but latterly a most wretched relic of the past, an eyesore, which was removed in 1874 in the course of Baron Grant's improvements.

Leicester Square had other tenants beside Sir Isaac Newton, compared with whom courtiers and gallants and fine gentlemen and ladies look very small indeed. Hogarth lived in this street, and so did Sir Joshua Reynolds. Hogarth's house was the last but two on the east side of the Square. Here he established himself, a young struggling man, with Jane Thornhill, the wife with whom he had made a stolen love-match. In this house, with the quaint sign of the Golden Head over the door, he worked, not as painters generally do, at a multitude of detached pieces, but depicting with his vivid brush a whole series of popular allegories on canvas. When he became rich, as in process of time he did, he had a house at Chiswick; but he still retained the Golden Head as his town-house, and in 1764 returned to it to die.

In No. 47 Sir Joshua Reynolds lived, and painted those charming portraits which have immortalised for us all that was most beautiful and famous in his epoch. He was a kindly genial lovable man, fond of society, and with a liking for display. He had a wonderful carriage, with the four seasons curiously painted in on the panels, and the wheels ornamented with carved foliage and gilding. The servants in attendance on this chariot wore silver-laced liveries; and as he had no time to drive in it himself, he made his sister take a daily airing in it, much to her discomfort, for she was a homely little lady with very simple tastes. He was a great dinner-giver; and as it was his custom to ask every pleasant person he met without any regard to the preparation made to receive them, it may be conjectured that there was often a want of the commonest requisites of the dinner-table. Even knives, forks, and glasses could not always be procured at first. But although his dinners partook very much of the nature of unceremonious scrambles, they were thoroughly enjoyable. Whatever was wanting, there was always cheerfulness and the pleasant kindly interchange of thought. In July 1792 Sir Joshua died in his own house in Leicester Square; and within a few hours of his death, an obituary notice of him was written by Burke, the manuscript of which was blotted with his tears.

In No. 28, on the eastern side of the Square, the celebrated anatomist John Hunter lived. Like most distinguished men of the day, he sat to Sir Joshua Reynolds for his portrait; but was so restless and preoccupied that he made a very bad sitter. At last one day he fell into a reverie. The happy moment had come; Sir Joshua with his instinctive tact caught the expression, and presented to us the great surgeon in one of his most characteristic attitudes. Two other celebrated surgeons, Cruickshank and Charles Bell, also lived in this Square. The house in which Bell resided for many years was large and ruinous, and had once been inhabited by Speaker Onslow. Here he set up his Museum, and began to lecture on

anatomy, having for a long time, he writes, scarcely forty pupils to lecture to.

During all the later portion of its history Leicester Square has been famous for shows. In 1771 Sir Ashton Lever exhibited a large and curious Museum in Leicester House. In 1796 Charles Dibdin built at Nos. 2 and 3, on the east side of Leicester Square, a small theatre, in which he gave an entertainment consisting of an interesting medley of anecdote and song. In 1787 Miss Linwood opened her gallery of pictures in needlework, an exhibition which lasted forty-seven years, for the last thirty-five of which it was exhibited at Savile House, a building which was destroyed by fire in 1865.

After Miss Linwood's, one of the best shows in Leicester Square was Burford's Panorama, which is now numbered with the things that were, its site being occupied by a French chapel and school. In 1851 a new show was inaugurated by Mr Wyld the geographer. It consisted of a monster globe sixty feet in diameter, which occupied the central dome of a building erected in the garden of the Square. The world was figured in relief on the inside of it, and it was viewed from several galleries at different elevations. It was exhibited for ten years, and was then taken down by its proprietor, owing to a dispute concerning the ownership of the garden. Out of this case, which was decided in 1867, the proceedings originated which resulted in the purchase and renovation of the garden by Baron Grant, who having once more made it trim and neat, handed it over to the Board of Works.

AN AUSTRALIAN FRAUD.

'WHAT can be keeping Davis to-night? Surely he is very late.' I had just made this remark when he knocked at the door.

'If you please ma'am, can I speak to you?' said he.

'Yes. Come in Davis. What has happened to keep you so late this evening?'

'I have been to see my grandfather, ma'am.'

'Well, how is he?'

'Oh, grandfather is right enough; but my aunt' [so he called his grandfather's second wife] 'is very ill; and I've heard a queer story to-night. It seems I am likely to come in for a large fortune—if it's all true they say.'

'Why, how is that Davis? Tell us all about it.'

'Well ma'am, you see my grandfather has had a letter sent him to read, that the clergyman at Carsten has received from some lawyer in Australia. The lawyer wants to find the next of kin to Tom Harris, an old man who has died in L— in Australia, and has left a hundred thousand pounds; and my aunt thinks she is his nearest relation.'

'How is that? Who was this Tom Harris?'

'My aunt's name was Harris, and she says her father's youngest brother was named Tom; that he went to Australia a many years ago, and has never written home nor been heard of since; and she thinks he is the man because he was born in these parts. This lawyer has sent letters to all the clergymen near here to make inquiries and to search all the registers for the certificate of his birth.'

'Then what are you going to do Davis?'

'I don't know ma'am. I'll see what grandfather says next time I go in to Dewsford.'

'Very well. Be sure you tell us what you hear, for we shall be anxious to know.'

This was indeed extraordinary news. Even in these days of self-seeking there is occasionally to be found a servant of the Caleb Balderston type, and Davis was one of them; he had grown up in our service from boyhood to manhood, and had so identified himself with our affairs and interests that he always spoke of our belongings as 'ours' and 'my.' We had complete confidence in him, and in return took an interest in all that concerned him and his family; hence his coming to us with this wonderful tale, feeling sure of our sympathy. Although it seemed too strange to be true, there was nevertheless a certain amount of possibility in it which kept alive our interest; and from time to time we used to ask Davis how his fortune was coming on. But beyond hearing conflicting details, which he got from his grandfather now and again, the affair did not seem to progress in the least; so we came to the conclusion that we must set to work ourselves to help him, if anything was to come of it.

The first thing to ascertain was that such a town or district as L— actually existed in Australia; and for this end we wrote to one of the directors of a colonial bank in London, and had the satisfaction of being told that he not only knew that there *was* a district so named, but that a man of reputed wealth bearing the name of Harris resided there.

We next thought we had better see Davis's aunt and try to get certain facts from her. But here a difficulty arose, for the poor woman had been confined to bed for some weeks, and we knew she was dying of a painful disease. It seemed cruel to disturb her about such things; but Davis was her adopted son, and we knew she would gladly do what she could to further his interests. We found her very weak, and her face bearing an expression of suffering that was distressing to see, but perfectly composed and alive to everything. I went forward gently and said: 'Good-morning, Mrs Davis. How are you to-day?'

'Thank you, ma'am; I be poorly.'

'Are you no better?'

'No ma'am. I don't hope ever to be better; but I must bide my time patiently.—How is Davis ma'am?'

'He is very well, thank you.'

'I have heard him speak of ye so often, ladies; he says you are all so kind to him, and that he could not have a better place.'

'O well, he is good and faithful to us, you know, so we may well be kind to him. But what is all this about this money? I fear you are too ill to be troubled about such matters, but we would like to help Davis if we could. Can you tell us anything about this man Harris?'

'Well ma'am, my father's name was Harris; and I remember hearing that his youngest brother was called Tom, and that he went to Australia.'

'Had your father any other brothers?'

'O yes. There was Henry. Then there were Mary, Elizabeth, and Anne.'

'What became of Henry?'

'I don't know; I know nothink about him.'

'Do you know where they were all born?'

'In the parish of Newcom; my father lived there when he was not at sea. There's a man who calls himself Harris, stays at Carsten now.'

'Do you think if we went to Newcom we should find the register they want?'

'Yes ma'am; I should think so.'

'Thank you Mrs Davis. I fear we are tiring you. It seems cruel to worry you with all these questions.'

'O ma'am, you are very kind to trouble yourself about it. I shall soon be where I'll need no money; but if Davis could get it and my poor old man, I'd be cruel glad. You see ma'am, he can't work as he used to.'

We left the poor woman, more anxious than ever to help to clear up the difficulty and, if possible, to secure some money to her husband and Davis, even if it were ever so small a share of the hundred thousand pounds. We therefore determined to drive to Newcom and Carsten; and accompanied by Davis, started for the latter place on a fine autumn morning.

The expedition proved most enjoyable. At first the road was a good one, just along the banks of the river, then ascending in zigzag for miles through rich woods, whose openings now and again disclosed magnificent views of country and river far below, with the blue sea in the distance; then out upon the moor, with its wealth of gorse and heather and its bracing air, making the search for a fortune an enjoyable thing in itself, independently of its result. At last we finally descended upon Carsten, an out-of-the-way village, lying on the slope of a hill.

Our first visit was to the Rectory, the servant informing us that Mr White the clergyman was out shooting, and the time of his return uncertain; so we resolved to ask about the old man Harris of whom we had heard. We found him in a field hoeing turnips, hale, hearty, and seemingly quite contented. At first he looked at us rather suspiciously, and was not inclined to answer questions. It then turned out that we were not by any means his first interviewers.

'There have been a many people here to see me,' said he. 'I wish now I had never said nothink about this man. I am not agoing to trouble myself; I have quite as much as I want. I am over eighty years of age. But you are all working for me. If there be any money, it *must* come to me in the end. And as you be all working for me, I beant agoing to trouble *myself*.' All this was said with the most indescribable air of self-satisfaction and complacency, the old man leaning on his hoe.

At last, by dint of a little coaxing, we got him to bring up some recollections from the depth of his eighty years. He stated that his cousin Tom Harris was the illegitimate son of Betty Smith, but that he was always called Harris; that he had gone to Australia; he recollected his having come over from the parish of Newcom to bid them good-bye, &c.

It was in vain we represented that the time he mentioned of this youth's departure did not correspond with the date required, and that Betty's son had no right to the name of Harris; he however, insisted that he was the man, and that he himself was his nearest heir, and that we were all working for him.

We then returned to the Rectory, in the hope

that the clergyman had tired of his gun, or had got hungry and come home to lunch. But no! In the meantime we got the parish clerk to bring the register, and we spent a considerable time poring over its faded old pages to try to find the date of Tom Harris's birth. It was no easy task; worn dirty old records of events nearly a century old, some in black-letter, with the signatures all but illegible. Page after page was patiently scanned; and births, marriages, and deaths of various Harrises were found; but either the Christian name was different, or if we did come to a Tom Harris, our excitement was speedily chilled by finding the date would not agree at all with the age of the man we sought.

Tired and hungry, we gave up the search, and went to find an inn and some refreshment. The inn we found; but as to the refreshment, that consisted of the perpetual bacon one is offered in village inns; not even the eggs were forthcoming. Not caring for bacon, we had to content ourselves with bread-and-cheese and milk.

It was now getting late; and the prospect of bad roads and crossing the moor in the dark was not inviting; so we had reluctantly to start without seeing the clergyman, though we had had the pleasure of a chat with his father, who was at the time on a visit to the Rectory. Soon we found ourselves at home, where we made up by a comfortable tea for our poor fare at dinner.

Of course we got laughed at for our pains; but that had not much effect. The dreary drive had more; and it was some time before we resumed our attempts. One thing we gained by our visit to Carsten; the clergyman's father advised us to get Davis's aunt to make a deposition before a magistrate of all she had told us. The poor woman was far too ill to be out of bed, and it seemed very unlikely she would even be able to do this unless it were done at once. So we persuaded my brother, who is a justice of peace, to go with us to see her, and write it all down from her own lips. A sad and solemn scene it was—the low-roofed room with only the most necessary furniture, yet clean and comfortable; the woman, slowly dying, speaking with difficulty, yet clear and collected, and exerting herself to recollect the scenes of her childhood and youth. Not for herself—for very soon she would be beyond all earthly need—but for her husband and her adopted son. An unlikely place in which to find the heir to a hundred thousand pounds.

Some time before, it had occurred to us she had better make a will, in case of the money coming after her death. We had tried to persuade her to get a lawyer to draw out one; but this she would by no means consent to do, on account of the expense, so the only thing left was to try to write one out for her which should include all possible contingencies. This we managed to do. She was quite satisfied with it, and her husband also. (What was more to the purpose, a lawyer friend afterwards told us it would 'stand.') We now took advantage of my brother's presence to get Mrs Davis to sign this will; and we all signed it as witnesses. It occurred to me that it might be disputed on the score of her not being in a fit state to make one; and I thought that if I could get the medical man who attended her to see her, it might be useful; so I went in search of him. I was fortunate enough to find him, and explained

matters, and said I was anxious he should be able to say that Mrs Davis was in a capable state when she made her will. He very good-naturedly went with me at once, and pronounced that she was perfectly collected, quite fit to understand and make any arrangements she wished. So that was settled.

Poor thing! we had not taken the precautions much too soon. Not many more visits to inquire for her, when the end came, peacefully and longed for. Whether or not the heiress of a hundred thousand pounds, she was an 'heir of God,' and His heirs are often found in the poorest of earthly homes.

We now determined to search the registers at Newcom. Here we found a rather disconsolate-looking Rectory. The door was opened by an old woman, who seemed to think we had better have stayed away, but who conducted us to her master because she could not help it. The rector was a nice old man who, when we explained our object, seemed anxious to help us. He said he had an old man in his parish who was one of that family, and would likely know all about it. So he rang the bell.

'Mary, where is old Harris working to-day?'

'I think sir, he is in the back-field digging potatoes.'

'Very well. Please go and tell him to come here.'

She disappeared, looking rather unwilling to do his bidding; I sometimes wonder if she ever did. Anyhow, the old man did not come. She was one of those servants who have been with one master till they get to believe themselves mistress, and more. She reminded me of an old Scotch servant who was in the service of a friend of ours in Edinburgh, who when the lady rang for coals, would look in at the door, examine the fire at the distance, and say: 'Deed mem, the fire doesna need mending,' and disappear without paying any further attention to the request.

As old Harris was not forthcoming, the clergyman next sent for the parish clerk and the registers. So here again we had a long search; this time with this success, that we found the register of marriage of the said Tom Harris's father and mother, and the births of all his brothers and sisters, but not his own—the only one which was of any use. We also found the register of the illegitimate Harris; and the date proved that he, as we had always thought, was certainly not the man. We had evidently got on the right track at last, for here were all the generations of Harrises, uncles, aunts, and cousins, but not *the* one. It was most unaccountable; but as there was nothing more to be done, we returned home still baffled.

We now began to wonder whether Tom Harris could possibly have been registered by some other name, not so unlikely a thing as it would be in our days. The clergyman told us that about the date we required, he knew there had been no resident clergyman in the parish; that the clergyman of another parish used to ride across the moor and take the duty, and that he often used to leave his clerk to fill up the registers. He had actually seen one register of marriage with a foot-note signed by the clergyman, to explain that the above couple had been registered under wrong names, and that he had married them over again a year after, to make sure!

Davis, thinking now, I suppose, that our amateur efforts were not succeeding, determined to apply to a lawyer in the village; so he and his grandfather consulted Mr Spiers, gave him all particulars, and got a promise that he would write to Australia to make inquiries. On Davis's return I asked him what Mr Spiers had said; but of course found that he had been too cautious to give an opinion; besides he had not been paid for it.

Some one now suggested that as Harris's father had been a sailor, perhaps Tom was born at sea. We discovered that there is a parish where such births are registered, and wrote accordingly to inquire. In a few days came a reply to the effect, that the books had been searched, but no such name was to be found.

We were getting in despair, beginning to think the whole affair a myth, when a fresh impetus was given to our energies by Davis bringing us the news that a gentleman was expected at the village in about two months who had actually known the said Harris in Australia; so for him we determined to wait. Meanwhile the cousins who were claiming the money through the illegitimate Harris were hard at work, writing and sending money to the lawyer in Australia, and receiving replies stating that he was doing all he could to elucidate the matter for them. Other cousins in the metropolis were also doing their best to establish their kinship and trace the pedigree of the Carsten Harris. It was quite wonderful how many relations started up in all quarters; and we used to get the most varied and perplexing accounts from time to time both from Davis and his grandfather, whom we often went to see. Poor old man! he had no money to send to the lawyer, which made us the more anxious to establish his claims, for it was clear that his deceased wife really was the nearest relative. He was a fine-looking old man, one of Nature's gentlemen, but very helpless in such a matter; and his gratitude to us was real and touching. He seemed surprised at the interest we took in it, and said: 'He could almost cry to think any one should take so much trouble for him.' To add to his disquietude, his cousins, who lived some miles off at a place called Everston, told him all sorts of bewildering things, and tried to get out of him what *we* were doing and finding out. He could keep his own counsel however.

It now seemed that the only remaining thing I could do was to write to a cousin of ours a banker in Australia, thinking that if such a very large sum of money was really unappropriated, a banker in the same district would be not unlikely to know something of it. I wrote accordingly, told him the tale, and asked him if he could tell me aught of either the man or the money.

The next event of interest was the arrival of Mr Brown the gentleman from Australia, who was said to have known Tom Harris. Strange to say it turned out that it was to Mr Brown's father that Harris had taken letters of introduction long years before. Mr Brown told us that he knew him perfectly well; that he was born in the parish of Newcom. (This was satisfactory, as it quite proved that our man was the right one.) He could tell us nothing as to his death, having lost sight of him for some years. He knew he was wealthy, but doubted his

having left any such sum as a hundred thousand, adding that the lawyer whose name we mentioned as our authority for the whole matter was, he knew, a great rogue. Mr Brown intended returning shortly to Australia, and promised to make inquiry for us, offering meanwhile to write to his own man of business there, who would do what he could to find out the truth. This we gladly assented to, and forwarded to him a small sum of money, which a relation of old Davis's had offered to spend in the cause.

Some time now elapsed, and we were almost forgetting the thing, when one morning Davis told me that two people wished to see me, and that he had shewn them up-stairs. Up I went, and found two women, perfect strangers to me, in possession of the drawing-room. One was big, fat, and vulgar, sitting very upright on the edge of her chair with her hands crossed in front of her. The other was a fashionably dressed woman, with an indescribably French air about her; due in part perhaps to a handsome lace tie she had arranged with French grace. We saluted each other, and I sat down wondering what they could possibly want. They seemed at a loss how to begin. At last the French-looking one said: 'I believe you know something of the Harris money. I have been told you are acquainted with a gentleman who knew Mr Harris, and we have come to ask for his address.'

I thought: 'You may have come for it, but you are not likely to get it.' (I fancied how Mr Brown would feel if he were to be suddenly appealed to by all the Harrieses from all quarters!)

I said: 'I know of a gentleman who knew Mr Harris; but he is not here at present' [he had left], 'and I am unable to give you his address.'

'Oh! can you give me no idea where I could see him? I am a dressmaker in Paris' [that accounted for the lace tie]. 'I only heard of this money two days ago. I took the first train for England, and came over to help sister to get the money. I don't wish it for myself—I have a good business—but for sister and her children.'

'There are others besides your sister who seem to have a better claim to it,' I observed. 'How do you prove your relationship?'

'Sister knows all about that. She is related to an old man called Harris at Carsten; and the lawyer says she has only to send out ten pounds to Australia to him and he will get the money for her. I am willing to go the length of two hundred pounds to help sister.'

I was sorry that the poor woman should risk the loss of her money, so I said: 'I think you had better not send any more money till we know more about it. I have been told this lawyer is not to be trusted.'

'O dear, yes! It is all right. He says sister is sure to get the money. Besides, he is Sir George Sleigh.'

This she seemed to think was a conclusive argument, and that I must be convinced that 'sister's' claims could not be disputed, and that a lawyer with a title was beyond distrust.

I next took some pains to convince them that even if Sir George's letters were all right, and their being the next of kin to the Carsten Harris proved, still he was not the man; that the date of his birth did not agree with that required, by many years; that we had traced the whole family

of our man, and that his probable date of birth quite agreed with the date given. I rang for Davis, thinking they might perhaps believe him. He however, did not seem inclined to have much to say to them; a French dressmaker was out of his line altogether, and he speedily retired. It was all no use. They thanked me, and asked me to let them know if I found out anything more, which I promised to do. They then departed, with their ideas evidently quite unshaken; indeed I am not sure they did not think I was deceiving them from interested motives.

It was now a year and half since we first commenced this hunt for a fortune. We had often anticipated the pleasure we should have in getting even a small part of this fabulous sum for old Davis and settling him in some neat little cottage with a garden, where instead of his daily hard work, he might enjoy his favourite occupation of growing cabbages, &c. Alas for our anticipations! One morning a letter arrived with the Australian post-marks, and in my cousin's writing. I was all eagerness to open it, thinking I should get some decisive information at last. I did so. A peal of laughter was the result, which brought the others to inquire the news. I read them the following: 'I wrote to a friend of mine, a banker in the neighbourhood you named, to make inquiries respecting the Harris affair. I think you will consider his reply decisive at least, though perhaps not satisfactory.' Here was a quotation from the banker's letter: 'With regard to old Harris, he is alive and kicking; I saw him the other day. He is not like dying, as far as I see. When he does, there is no chance of his leaving a hundred thousand pounds, though he is a very well-to-do man. Besides, he has a family of his own, who would of course inherit whatever he may leave. Sleigh is a great rogue; he has been trying the same game here with old Harris, telling him that a relation of his in England has left him a property there.'

'Alive and kicking!' More decisive than elegant certainly.

So this was the end of all our hopes and all our trouble. There was nothing to be done now but to tell poor Davis, which accordingly I did as sympathetically as possible. He took it very quietly, saying he never did believe in it! The old grandfather was sorely disappointed, but very grateful that we had found out the truth, and so saved him from thinking any more about it.

My cousin's letter was shortly followed by one from Mr Brown, corroborating the facts, and returning the money which had been sent to his lawyer, minus a trifling sum which had been expended before the facts were ascertained. Besides all this, Mr Brown had actually met old Harris at an elegant wedding-breakfast in the house of one of the leading men in the colony, the bride being a relation of his. Of course in such circumstances Mr Brown did not think it expedient to inform him of the anxiety of his relations concerning him.

We had at all events found the right man; but after this dénouement we thought it only kind to let the Harrieses in Everton, &c. know the facts of the case. To our amazement, we were utterly discredited both by them and the French dressmaker; and we are told that they are actually still sending out money to 'Sir George,' who

obligingly informs them that his investigations are progressing favourably, and that he hopes soon to establish their claim to the Hundred Thousand Pounds!

[The foregoing tale, which we are assured is perfectly true, shews how cautiously we should receive statements of windfalls, from unknown sources. We are told that there are certain would-be lawyers in the colonies (if not nearer home) whose nefarious business it is to obtain sums of money from those to whom they transmit the intelligence of friends deceased, and money going begging! Their *modus operandi* is to write for money to assist them in negotiating with the colonial government for the realisation of the deceased's capital, and its transmission to the lucky (!) heir in Great Britain. Sum after sum is thus written for, and probably sent, by the unsuspecting victim; and so it goes on till the bubble bursts and the fraud is discovered.—Ed.]

WILD-BEES.

No winged insect has been more frequently written about or is better known than the honey-bee, which may be considered a civilised animal, living in hives under general observation. Few know anything about other tribes of bees who pursue a wild existence, making for themselves holes for a residence in mossy banks and other places suitable to their nature. We propose to say something as regards these wild-bees, which are very varied in appearance and character.

Some wild-bees are what is termed solitary, others are social. Solitary bees pair, and each pair have a separate nest. Social bees live together in large communities after the manner so familiar to every cottage gardener. Solitary bees are often gregarious, that is flock together; in fact no insect is fonder of society. Sandy tracts are the most frequented by them, more especially commons and sand-pits. The most usual habitat for solitary bees is a sand-pit; there one may see them busily driving their fairy-like tunnels into the perpendicular face of the bank with an energy and perseverance well worthy of our imitation. It is a very pretty scene, and not soon to be forgotten. Thousands of little insects are ceaselessly toiling for the sake of their young ones; all over the face of the pit may be seen countless holes so beautifully rounded as to give the impression that they have been all formed by one tool. Here is a bright-looking little bee busily opening a fresh tunnel. Let us watch her for a moment. Such digging and shovelling as never was seen; whilst down below, there springs up a little mound of soft sand, scraped out of the burrow by the hind-legs of the toiler. A little farther on is another burrow; the hole is beautifully circular, and the little heap of sand below is larger and dirtier, shewing that some hours have passed since the nest was finished. Suddenly down pops a pretty female bee close by the entrance to the tunnel. How active she has

been! Her body and legs are covered with pollen dust, which gives her a yellow hue. She is a little tired after her morning's work, and rests awhile, sunning herself on the face of the bank; very soon she runs quickly into her burrow and disappears from view. At the farthest end of the tunnel is a circular cell, carefully hammered round the sides, and made firm by a kind of glue, to prevent a fall of sand. In the middle of this cell is a round pellet of pollen and honey, and on this ball of food is placed the egg, whence in time will emerge a hungry and ravenous grub.

Some of our wild-bees are called 'artificers,' and their life-histories are among the most interesting of all. There are the plasterers, who belong to the genus *Colletes*, a word signifying 'a plasterer.' The plasterer bees burrow in sand or in the interstices of old walls. They are pre-eminently gregarious insects, enormous multitudes congregating together in one spot. They drive tunnels slightly larger than their own bodies; and having excavated the material in which they burrow to the depth of eight or ten inches, they begin the task of furnishing. They possess beautiful, two-lobed, flat tongues with rounded ends. These tongues serve the purposes of trowels, and by the help of them they plaster the interior of their tunnels with a peculiar fluid secreted in their glands. This soon hardens, forming a membrane more delicate than the thinnest gold-beater's skin, and resembling in its glitter the slimy track of a snail. Three or four of these membranes are successively formed, one inside another, and the cell is then stored with honey and pollen. An egg is laid, and the cell is sealed up with a cap of the same material. When completed, each is somewhat thimble-shaped; and several being formed in the same burrow, they fit most beautifully into each other, and furnish us with a most interesting illustration of insect architecture.

Then there are the mason bees, belonging to the genus *Osmia*. Although they are called mason bees as a group, some burrow in the earth, and others in the pith of bramble-sticks; but nearly all of them construct a kind of stone for the purpose of making their cells. They are pre-eminently spring insects; the commonest species, *Osmia bicornis*, is often abundant when the laburnum is in flower. Its habits vary according to circumstances, and its nests are found in nearly every imaginable situation. Two kinds of mason bees choose empty snail-shells for their homes. In selecting a shell, the bee sometimes pitches upon an unusually large one with a very roomy whorl. In such cases she fills the space by forming two cells side by side; and when she reaches the opening of the shell, and finds the mouth of the whorl too large for even this device, she constructs a couple of cells transversely. One species of this interesting genus, found in Perthshire, forms its cocoons in the hollow cavities beneath flat stones. A stone was once found at Glen Almond the size of which was ten inches by six; and no less than two hundred and thirty cocoons were found adhering to it.

From the masons let us turn to the upholsterers or tapestry bees, a very interesting race of little creatures, which cut with singular agility circular pieces out of the leaves and flowers of trefoil poppies and scarlet geraniums. Their jaws are robust and specially fitted for this purpose. These pieces of floral upholstery they use for covering in their cells, which are formed sometimes underground and at others in decayed wood. They belong chiefly to the genus *Megachile*; but there is one not belonging to this genus which is of equal interest with them, whose habits are thus quaintly but accurately described by White in his *Natural History of Selborne*. 'There is a sort of wild-bee frequenting the garden campeon for the sake of its tomentum, which probably it turns to some purpose in the business of nidification. It is very pleasant to see with what address it strips off the pubes running from the top to the bottom of a branch, and shaving it bare with the dexterity of a hoop-shaver. When it has got a vast bundle almost as large as itself, it flies away, holding it secure between its chin and fore-legs.' This pretty bee has often been noticed by observers. The woolly material she gathers for the protection of her nest, for the latter is usually fixed in some exposed position, needing not only secrecy but protection from foes and storms.

Some of our wild-bees do not make any nests of their own, but inhabit the homes of other species, though whether they pay any rent for the accommodation they obtain is to say the least doubtful. Such bees are called parasites, a name borrowed from the well-known social character sometimes called a sponge. Whether these insects are really parasites in the sense of getting as much as they can out of other people, is not known. Some parasites habitually accompany particular species, in whose nests they are invariably found; others frequent the nests of a variety of species. Again, some of the parasites are so like their landlords, that a suspicion attaches to them that they deceive them by the similarity of their appearance; whilst on the other hand some are so different that no industrious bee with any *nous* in its head could possibly mistake them for its brothers and sisters. The most probable use these parasites serve is to prevent the waste of surplus food, as Nature everywhere provides scavengers. Some of them are dowdy in their appearance, and others are gaudily dressed, rivaling the colours of the wasp. The most gaudy are those belonging to the genus *Nomada*. These insects are true nomads, for we find them everywhere in the bright days of May wandering at their own sweet will over the fields, lanes, and woodlands. Industrious bees vary in the manner in which they treat their lodgers. Some live with them on very friendly terms, but others never meet them without picking a quarrel.

The beautiful brushes with which female bees are provided either on their hind-legs or on their bodies are entirely wanting in the parasitic species; but it is curious to note that the absence of these brushes does not always denote that the insect is a parasite, for several genera of industrious bees are quite destitute of them.

We cannot stop to describe at length the interesting carpenter bees; the singular long-horned bee (*Eucera longicornis*), the only British representative of a tribe very numerous abroad; or

the fantastic *Dasypoda hirtipes*, with its densely tufted legs; or the interesting genus *Anthophora*—one or two species of which are the harbingers of spring, and the males of which have their legs feathered like a spaniel's; and we have only room to glance very superficially at the well-known and fine insects known as 'humble' or more correctly 'hummer' bees. These insects abound in every part of our land, and in fact inhabit nearly every portion of the globe except Australia and New Zealand. They are most abundant in cold climates, and many of them inhabit the Arctic regions. Each community is composed of three classes of individuals, males, females, and workers. The females or queens are immediately recognised by their large size; and as a rule the workers closely resemble them in colour, but are much smaller. The males are usually larger than the workers, and have bigger heads; but they differ from them very materially in personal appearance, and are generally brighter and more active. Amongst hummer bees the males often vary to a marvellous extent. Worker bees are really inferior females, and have stings and lay eggs.

Their life-history is as follows: At the end of autumn all the males and workers die. The females hide themselves in crannies, where they pass the winter in a state of torpidity called hibernation. As soon as the spring has fairly set in, and almost before the hedges have sprung into leaf, they emerge from their hiding-places; and after a few hours of idleness, they commence the work of fixing upon a home. Each female selects a suitable spot, and having furnished the retreat with wax and honey, she lays eggs, which invariably produce workers, who soon arrive at maturity and assist their parent in the building and completing of the nest. More eggs are laid, and more workers appear. By-and-by male bees are developed, and the nest is by September pretty well supplied with occupants. With the first cold days at the end of autumn the males and workers die off, leaving the females to survive the winter and start a fresh circle of bee-life. A hummer bee's nest is a kind of hostelry, whereunto all kinds of insects resort. Mites, beetles, moths, worms, caterpillars, and two-winged flies often swarm in them. Hummer bees who build their combs in moss are called carders. Although they usually construct their nests of moss, they do not hesitate to use other substances when they are more handy. Cases have been known in which they have diligently collected horse-hairs from stable-yards, and they have repeatedly been noticed to take possession of birds' nests, and once even to build up their combs round the eggs which a robin had but just laid.

Such are our British wild-bees. A large volume might be written on their habits and the structure of their nests; but we have done the best we can with the limited space at our disposal to give the reader a general knowledge of these little creatures, which if superficial, may yet perhaps incite to a study of their economy; and if so, this little article, humble as it is, may be the means of introducing some one to a most entertaining field of study in the coming spring.

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